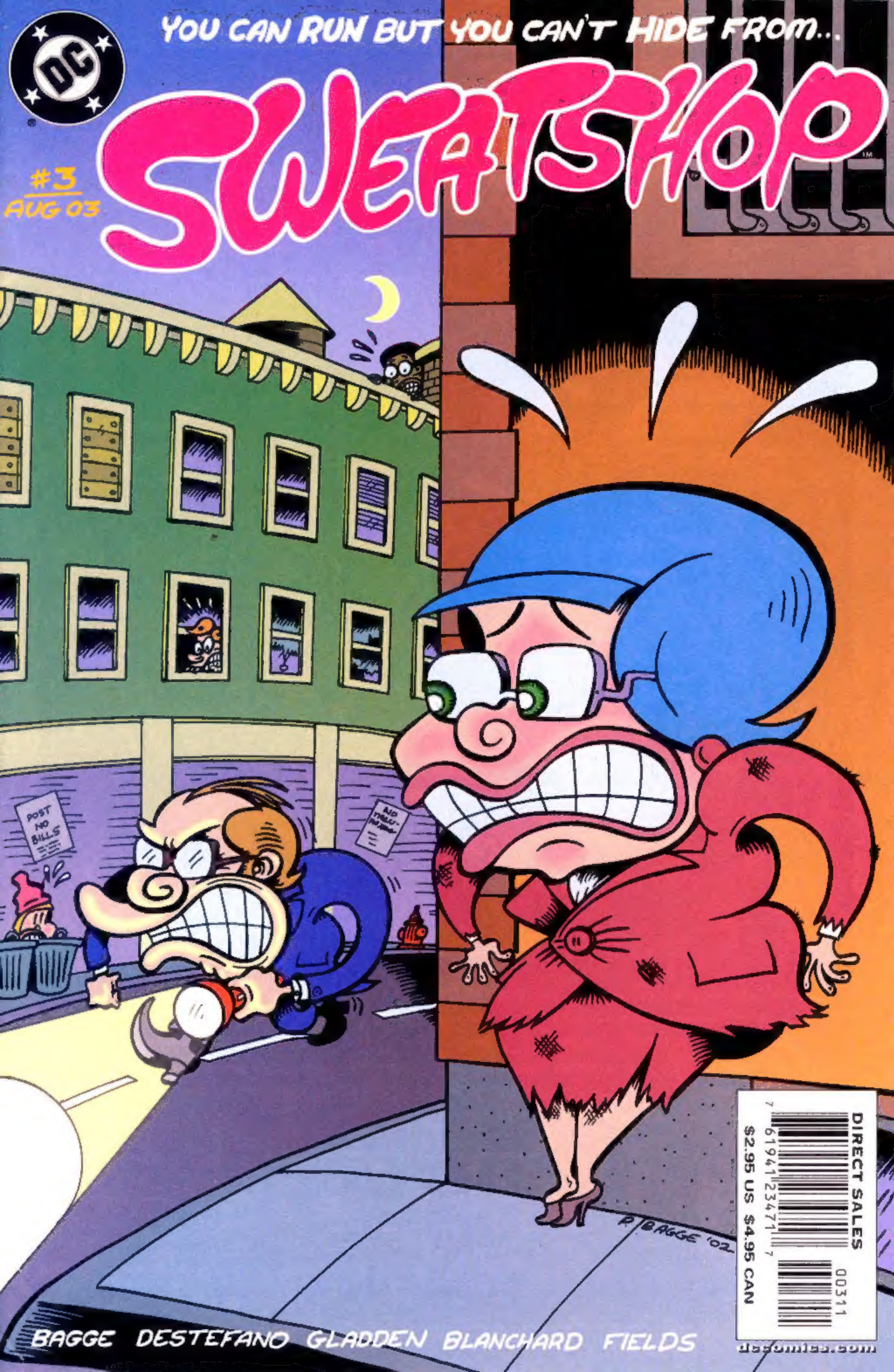

YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM...
SWEATSHOP
#3
AUG 03
POST NO BILLS
P. BAGGE '02
DIRECT SALES
$2.95 US $4.95 CAN
BAGGE DESTEFANO GLADDEN BLANCHARD FIELDS
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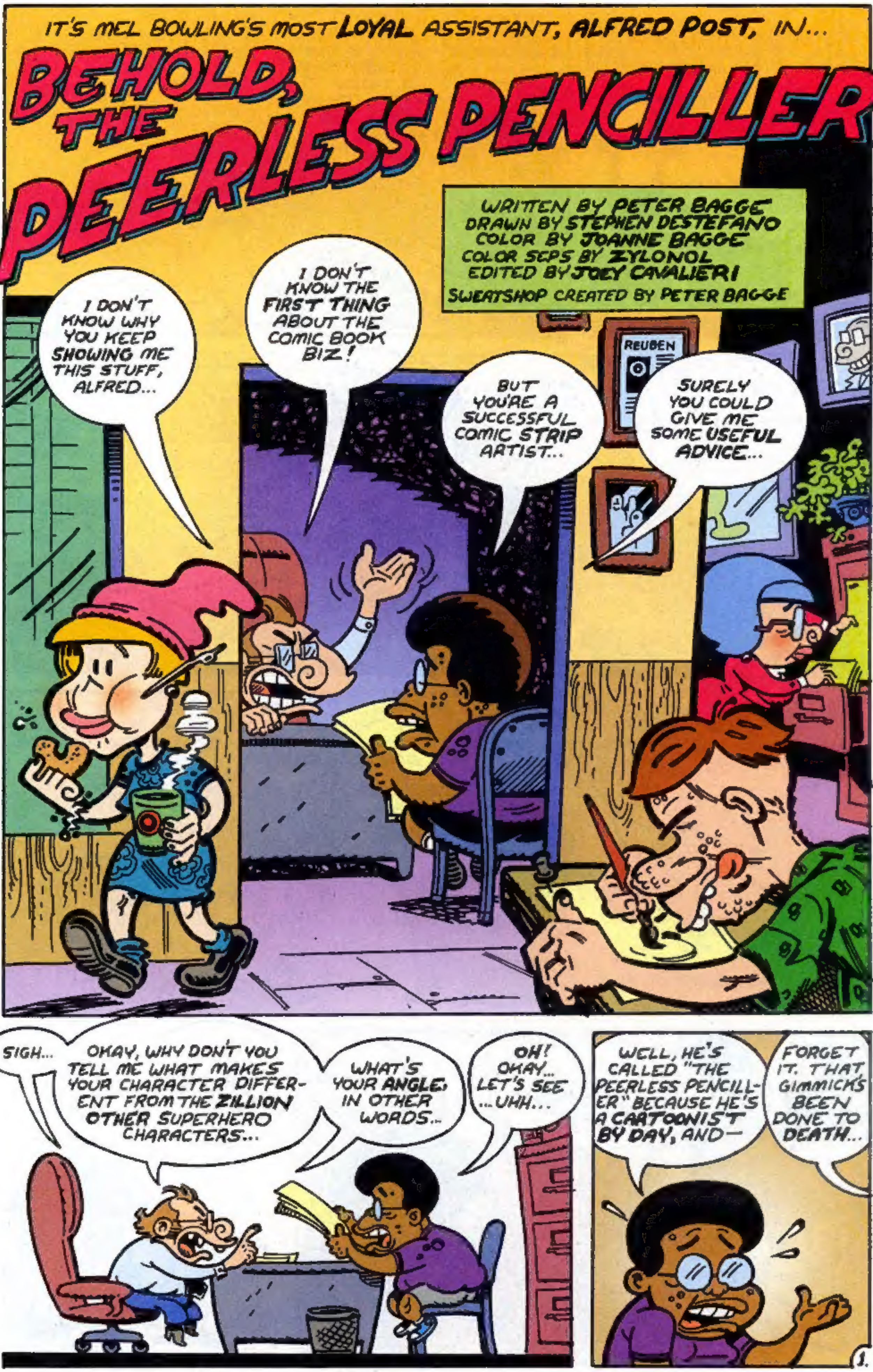
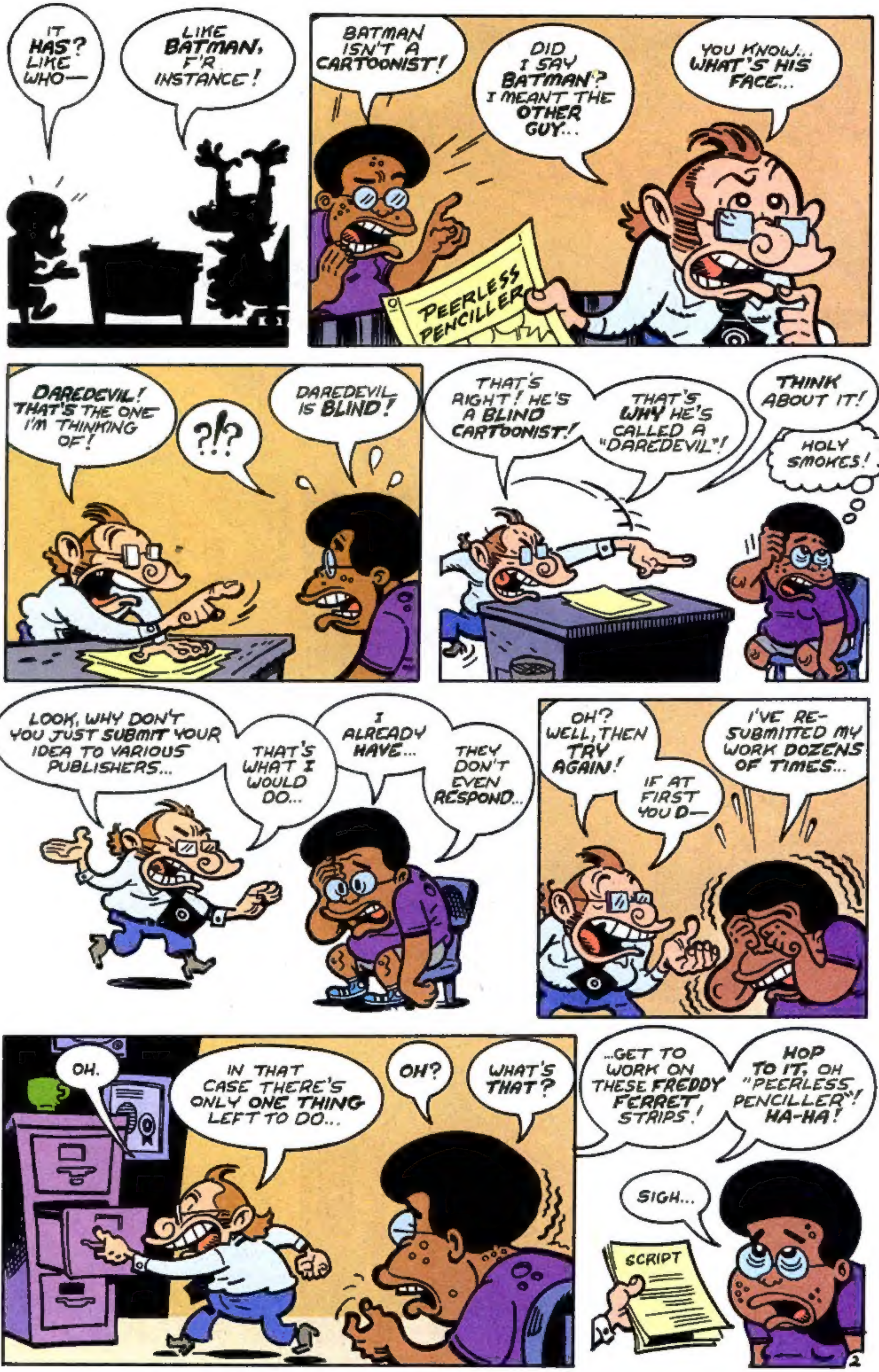
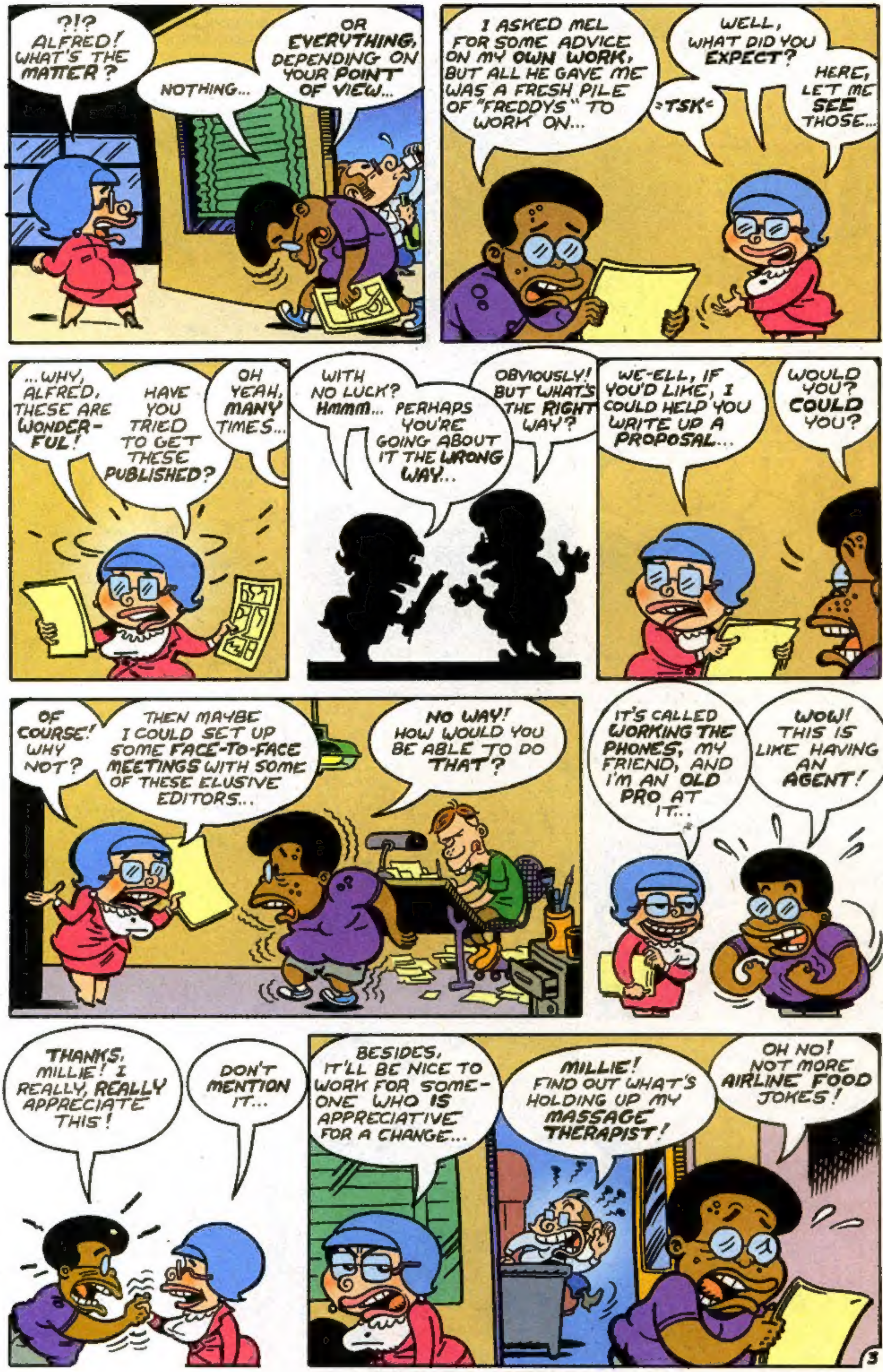
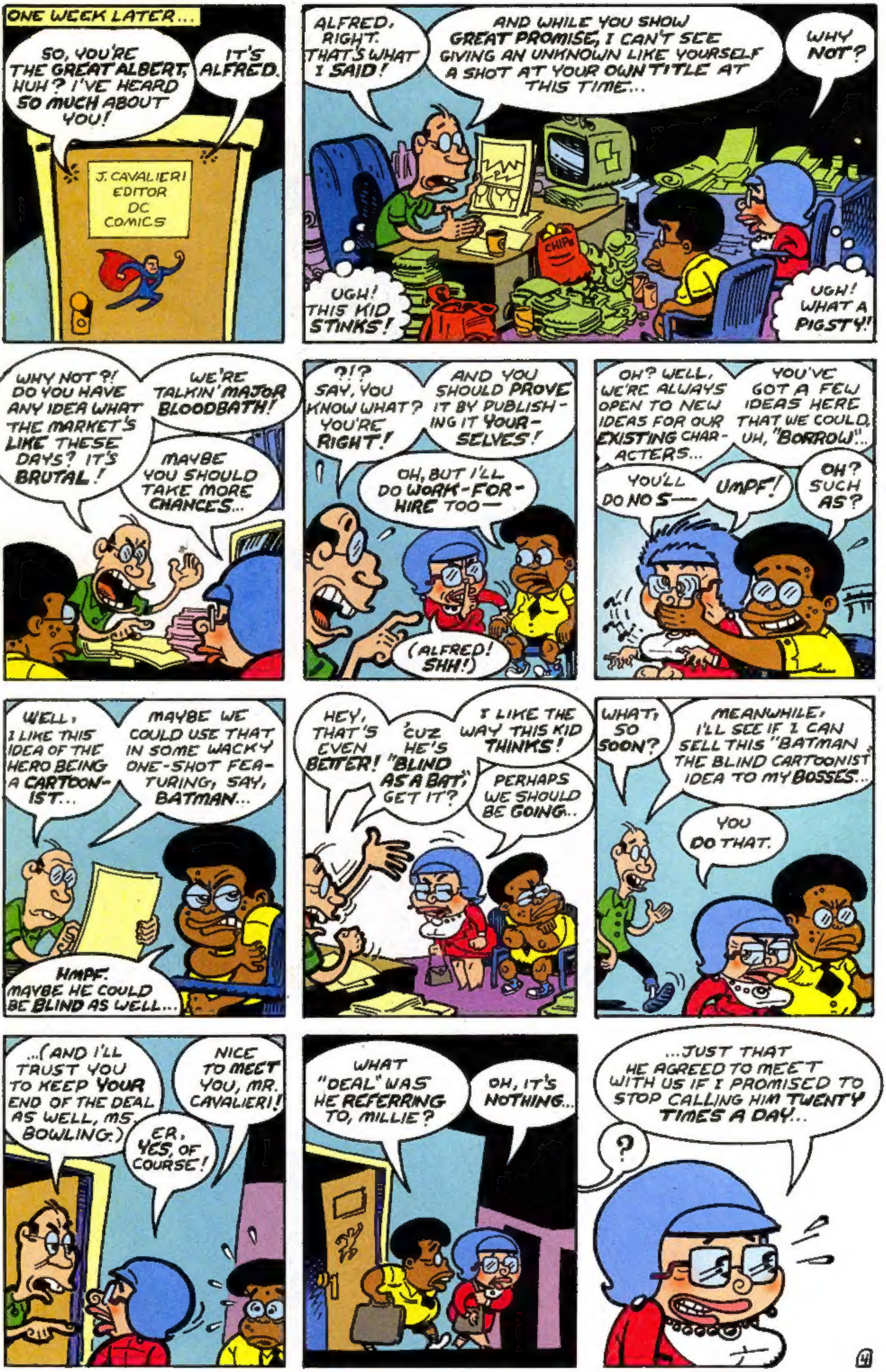

IT'S MEL BOWLING'S MOST LOYAL ASSISTANT, ALFRED POST, IN...
BEHOLD, THE PEERLESS PENCILLER
WRITTEN BY PETER BAGGE
DRAWN BY STEPHEN DESTEFANO
COLOR BY JOANNE BAGGE
COLOR SEPS BY ZYLONOL
EDITED BY JOEY CAVALIERI
SWEATSHOP CREATED BY PETER BAGGE
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU KEEP SHOWING ME THIS STUFF, ALFRED...
I DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT THE COMIC BOOK BIZ!
BUT YOU'RE A SUCCESSFUL COMIC STRIP ARTIST...
SURELY YOU COULD GIVE ME SOME USEFUL ADVICE...
REUBEN
SIGH...
OKAY, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT MAKES YOUR CHARACTER DIFFERENT FROM THE ZILLION OTHER SUPERHERO CHARACTERS...
WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE, IN OTHER WORDS...
OH! OKAY... LET'S SEE ...UHH...
WELL, HE'S CALLED "THE PEERLESS PENCILLER" BECAUSE HE'S A CARTOONIST BY DAY, AND—
FORGET IT. THAT GIMMICK'S BEEN DONE TO DEATH...
1.

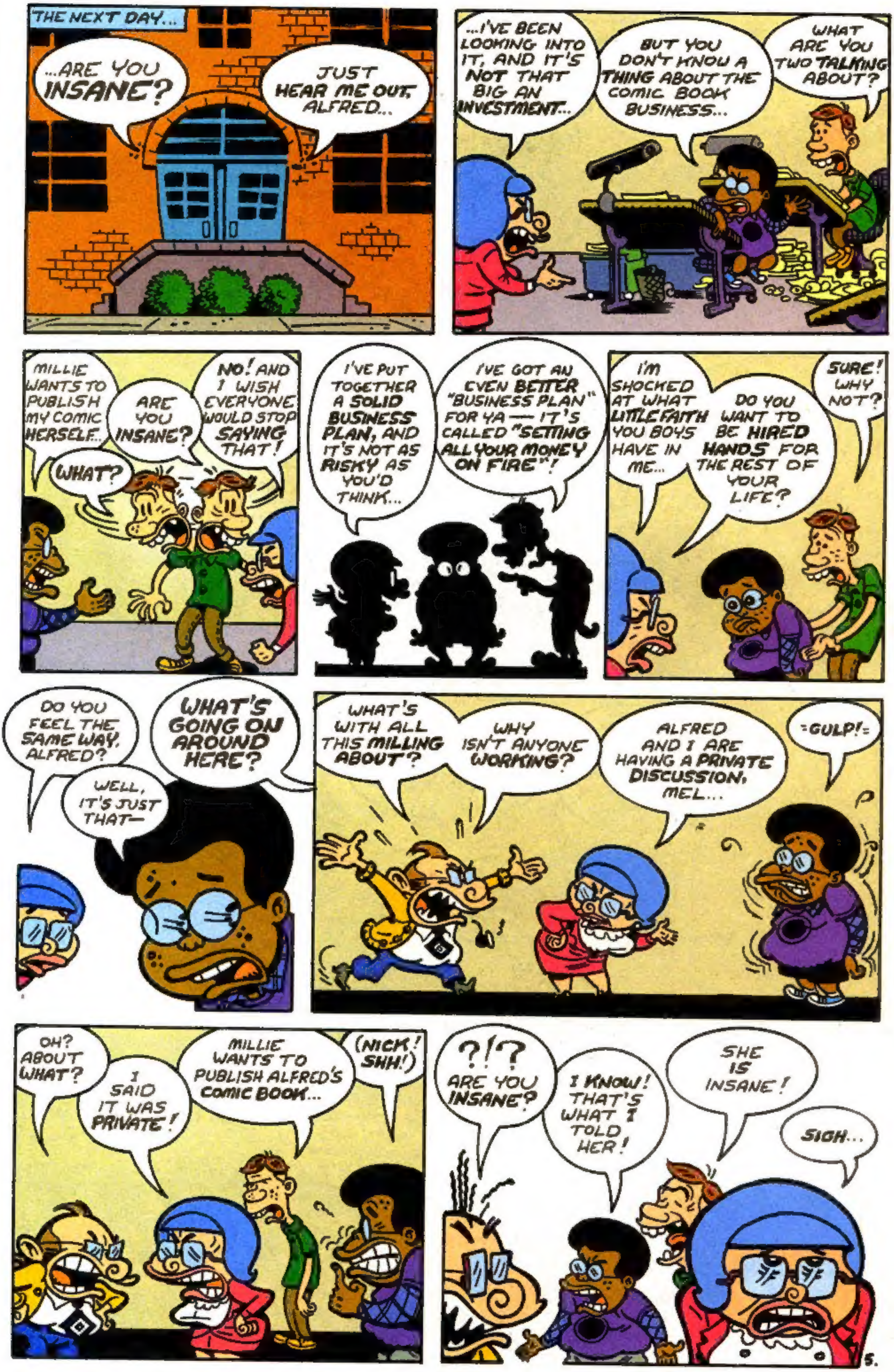


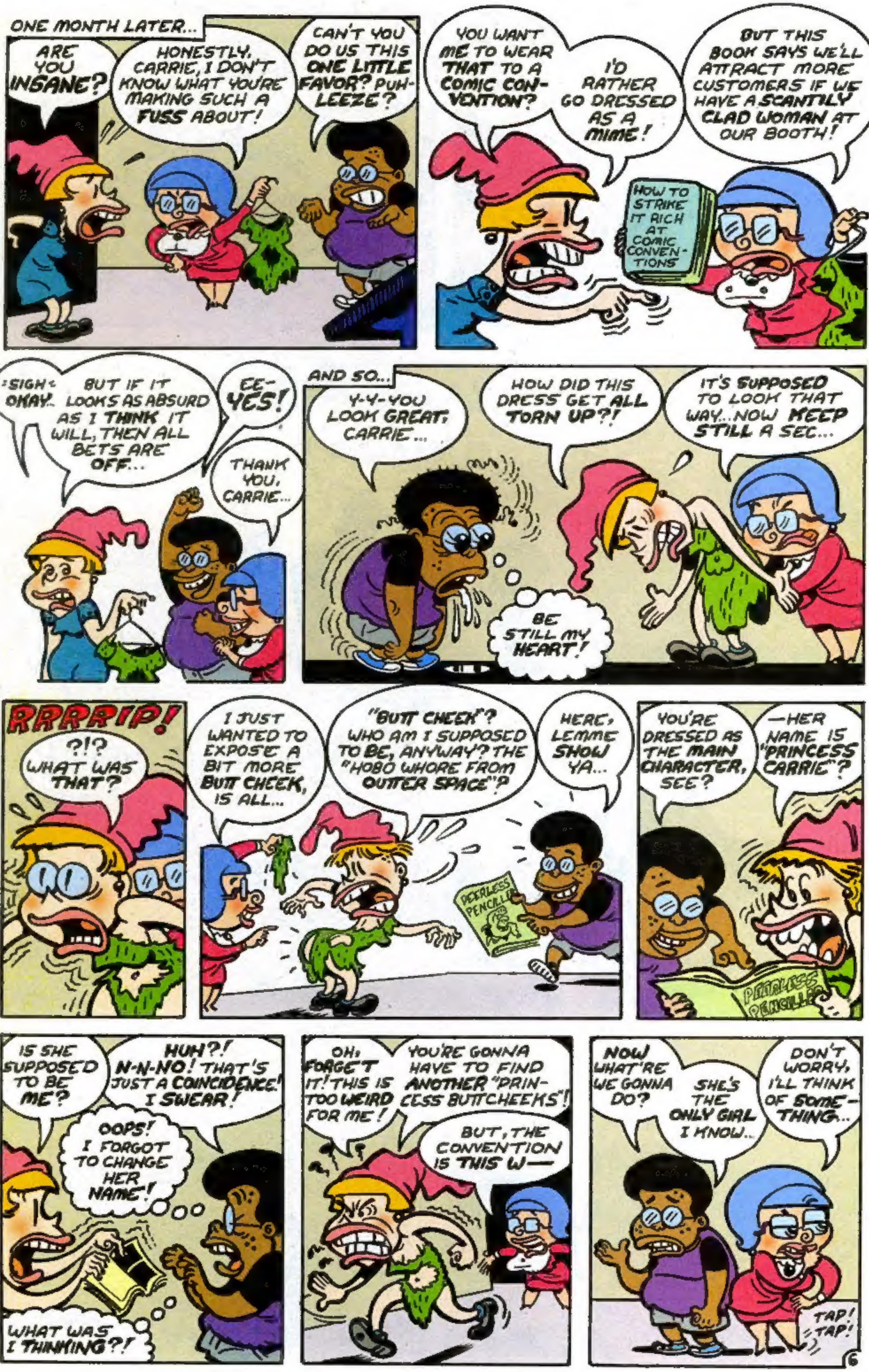
IT HAS? LIKE WHO—
LIKE BATMAN, F'R INSTANCE!
BATMAN ISN'T A CARTOONIST!
DID I SAY BATMAN? I MEANT THE OTHER GUY...
YOU KNOW... WHAT'S HIS FACE...
PEERLESS PENCILLER
DAREDEVIL! THAT'S THE ONE I'M THINKING OF!
?!?
DAREDEVIL IS BLIND!
THAT'S RIGHT! HE'S A BLIND CARTOONIST!
THAT'S WHY HE'S CALLED A "DAREDEVIL"!
THINK ABOUT IT!
HOLY SMOKES!
LOOK, WHY DON'T YOU JUST SUBMIT YOUR IDEA TO VARIOUS PUBLISHERS...
THAT'S WHAT I WOULD DO...
I ALREADY HAVE...
THEY DON'T EVEN RESPOND...
OH? WELL, THEN TRY AGAIN!
IF AT FIRST YOU D—
I'VE RE-SUBMITTED MY WORK DOZENS OF TIMES...
OH.
IN THAT CASE THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO...
OH?
WHAT'S THAT?
...GET TO WORK ON THESE FREDDY FERRET STRIPS!
HOP TO IT, OH "PEERLESS PENCILLER"! HA-HA!
SIGH...
SCRIPT

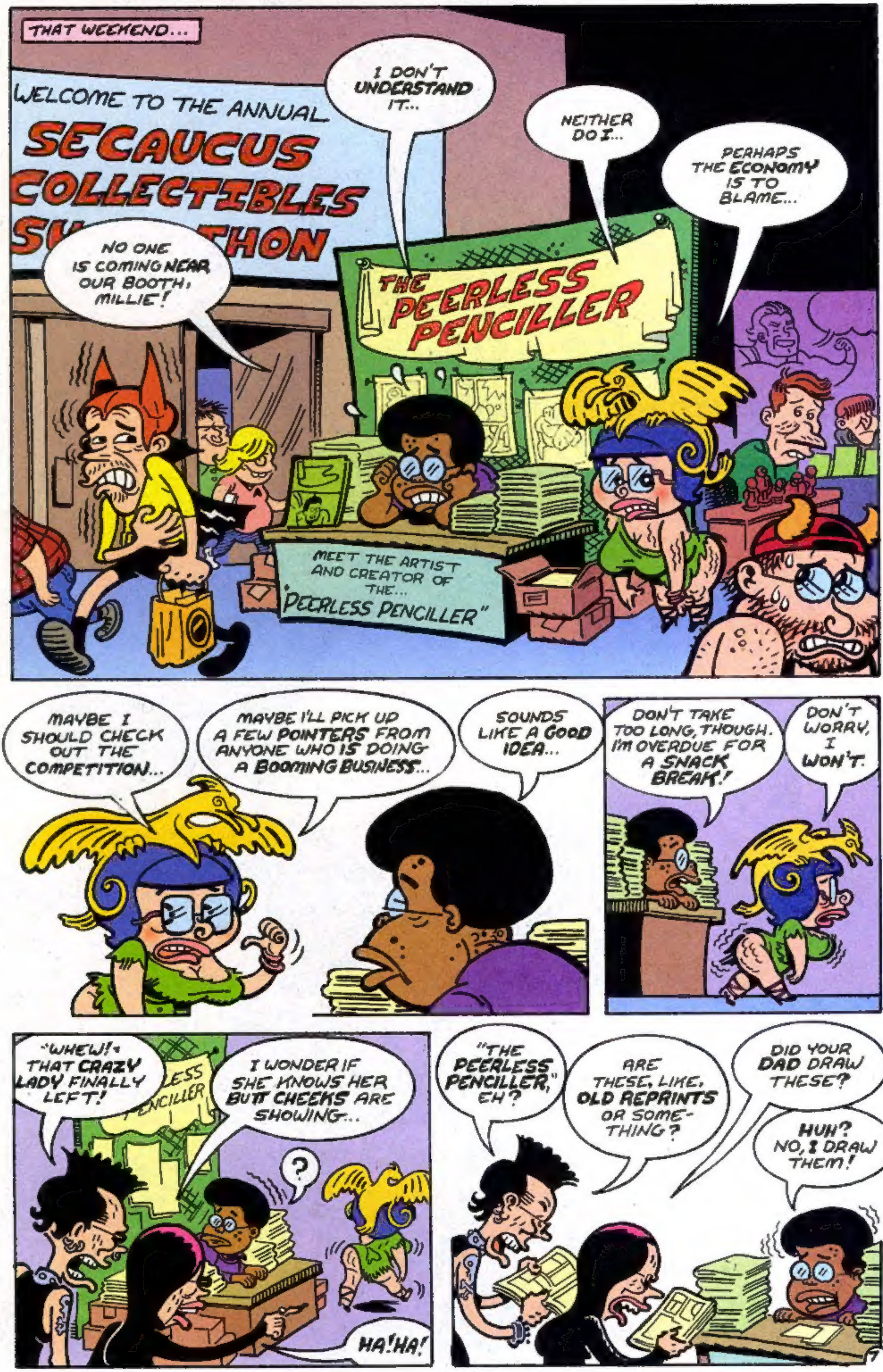

?!? ALFRED! WHAT'S THE MATTER?
NOTHING...
OR EVERYTHING, DEPENDING ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW...
I ASKED MEL FOR SOME ADVICE ON MY OWN WORK, BUT ALL HE GAVE ME WAS A FRESH PILE OF "FREDDYS" TO WORK ON...
WELL, WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
=TSK=
HERE, LET ME SEE THOSE...
...WHY, ALFRED, THESE ARE WONDER-FUL!
HAVE YOU TRIED TO GET THESE PUBLISHED?
OH YEAH, MANY TIMES...
WITH NO LUCK? HMMM... PERHAPS YOU'RE GOING ABOUT IT THE WRONG WAY...
OBVIOUSLY! BUT WHAT'S THE RIGHT WAY?
WE-ELL, IF YOU'D LIKE, I COULD HELP YOU WRITE UP A PROPOSAL...
WOULD YOU? COULD YOU?
OF COURSE! WHY NOT?
THEN MAYBE I COULD SET UP SOME FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS WITH SOME OF THESE ELUSIVE EDITORS...
NO WAY! HOW WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO DO THAT?
IT'S CALLED WORKING THE PHONES, MY FRIEND, AND I'M AN OLD PRO AT IT...
WOW! THIS IS LIKE HAVING AN AGENT!
THANKS, MILLIE! I REALLY, REALLY APPRECIATE THIS!
DON'T MENTION IT...
BESIDES, IT'LL BE NICE TO WORK FOR SOME-ONE WHO IS APPRECIATIVE FOR A CHANGE...
MILLIE! FIND OUT WHAT'S HOLDING UP MY MASSAGE THERAPIST!
OH NO! NOT MORE AIRLINE FOOD JOKES!

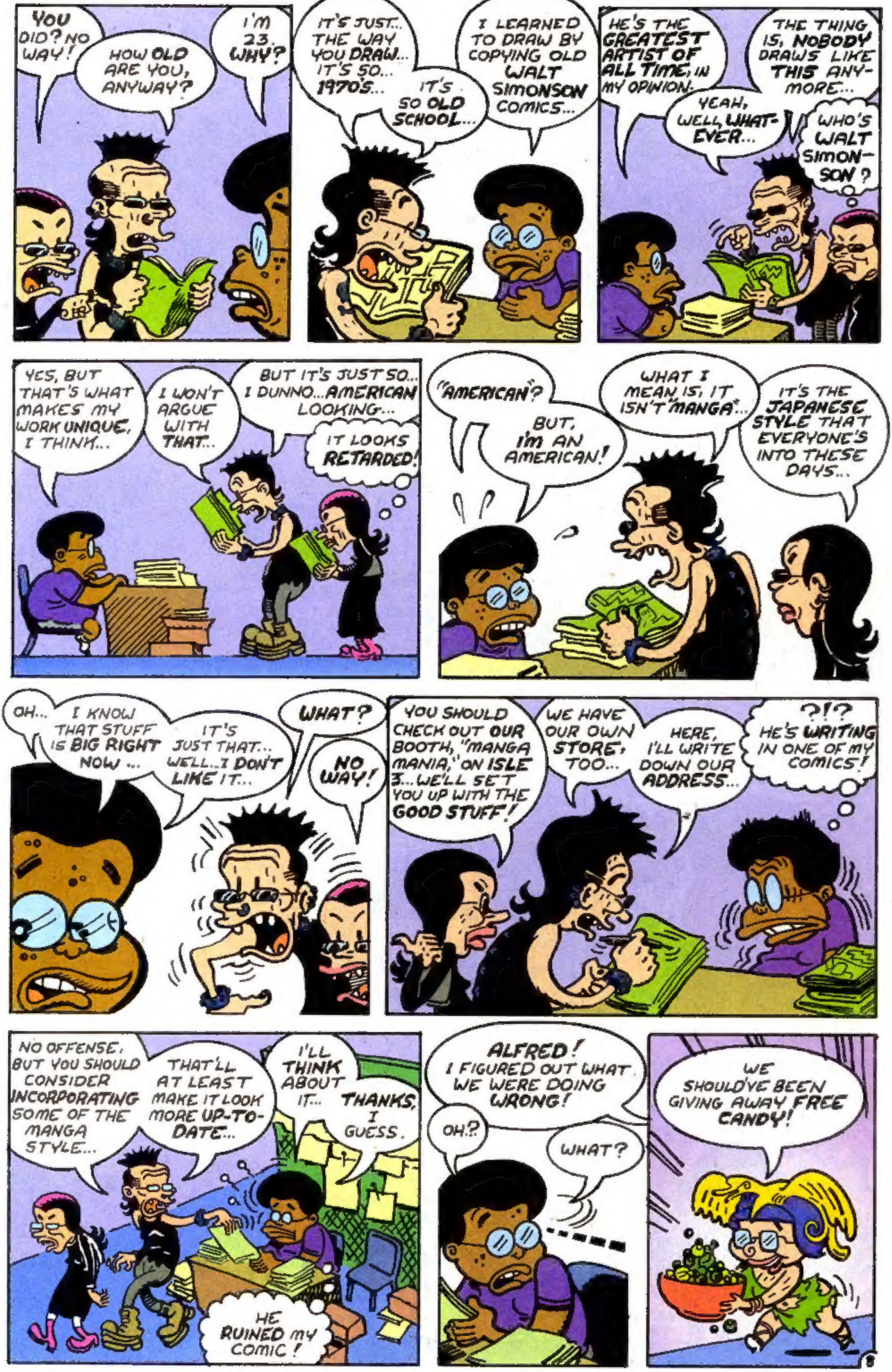


ONE WEEK LATER...
SO, YOU'RE THE GREAT ALBERT, HUH? I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU!
IT'S ALFRED.
J. CAVALIERI EDITOR DC COMICS
ALFRED, RIGHT. THAT'S WHAT I SAID!
AND WHILE YOU SHOW GREAT PROMISE, I CAN'T SEE GIVING AN UNKNOWN LIKE YOURSELF A SHOT AT YOUR OWN TITLE AT THIS TIME...
WHY NOT?
CHIPS
UGH! THIS KID STINKS!
UGH! WHAT A PIGSTY!
WHY NOT?! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THE MARKET'S LIKE THESE DAYS? IT'S BRUTAL!
WE'RE TALKIN' MAJOR BLOODBATH!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE MORE CHANCES...
?!? SAY, YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU'RE RIGHT!
AND YOU SHOULD PROVE IT BY PUBLISHING IT YOURSELVES!
OH, BUT I'LL DO WORK-FOR-HIRE TOO—
(ALFRED! SHH!)
OH? WELL, WE'RE ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW IDEAS FOR OUR EXISTING CHARACTERS...
YOU'VE GOT A FEW IDEAS HERE THAT WE COULD, UH, "BORROW"...
YOU'LL DO NO S—
UMPF!
OH? SUCH AS?
WELL, I LIKE THIS IDEA OF THE HERO BEING A CARTOONIST...
MAYBE WE COULD USE THAT IN SOME WACKY ONE-SHOT FEATURING, SAY, BATMAN...
HMPF. MAYBE HE COULD BE BLIND AS WELL...
HEY, THAT'S EVEN BETTER!
'CUZ HE'S "BLIND AS A BAT," GET IT?
I LIKE THE WAY THIS KID THINKS!
PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE GOING...
WHAT, SO SOON?
MEANWHILE, I'LL SEE IF I CAN SELL THIS "BATMAN, THE BLIND CARTOONIST" IDEA TO MY BOSSES...
YOU DO THAT.
...(AND I'LL TRUST YOU TO KEEP YOUR END OF THE DEAL AS WELL, MS. BOWLING.)
NICE TO MEET YOU, MR. CAVALIERI!
ER, YES, OF COURSE!
WHAT "DEAL" WAS HE REFERRING TO, MILLIE?
OH, IT'S NOTHING...
...JUST THAT HE AGREED TO MEET WITH US IF I PROMISED TO STOP CALLING HIM TWENTY TIMES A DAY...
?


THE NEXT DAY...
...ARE YOU INSANE?
JUST HEAR ME OUT, ALFRED...
...I'VE BEEN LOOKING INTO IT, AND IT'S NOT THAT BIG AN INVESTMENT...
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT THE COMIC BOOK BUSINESS...
WHAT ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
MILLIE WANTS TO PUBLISH MY COMIC HERSELF...
WHAT?
ARE YOU INSANE?
NO! AND I WISH EVERYONE WOULD STOP SAYING THAT!
I'VE PUT TOGETHER A SOLID BUSINESS PLAN, AND IT'S NOT AS RISKY AS YOU'D THINK...
I'VE GOT AN EVEN BETTER "BUSINESS PLAN" FOR YA — IT'S CALLED "SETTING ALL YOUR MONEY ON FIRE"!
I'M SHOCKED AT WHAT LITTLE FAITH YOU BOYS HAVE IN ME...
DO YOU WANT TO BE HIRED HANDS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?
SURE! WHY NOT?
DO YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY, ALFRED?
WELL, IT'S JUST THAT—
WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?
WHAT'S WITH ALL THIS MILLING ABOUT?
WHY ISN'T ANYONE WORKING?
ALFRED AND I ARE HAVING A PRIVATE DISCUSSION, MEL...
=GULP!=
OH? ABOUT WHAT?
I SAID IT WAS PRIVATE!
MILLIE WANTS TO PUBLISH ALFRED'S COMIC BOOK...
(NICK! SHH!)
?!?
ARE YOU INSANE?
I KNOW! THAT'S WHAT I TOLD HER!
SHE IS INSANE!
SIGH...

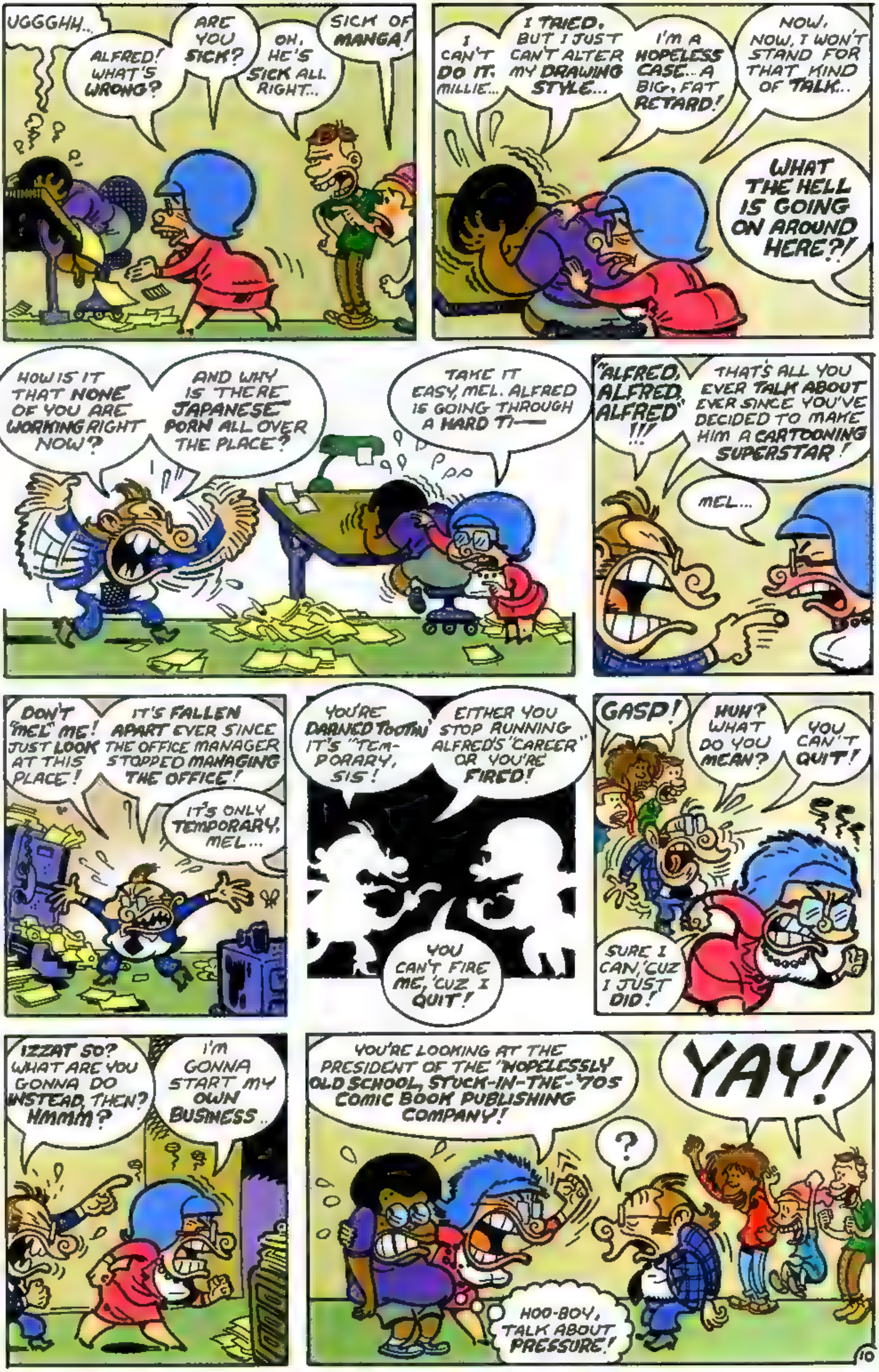

ONE MONTH LATER...
ARE YOU INSANE?
HONESTLY, CARRIE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MAKING SUCH A FUSS ABOUT!
CAN'T YOU DO US THIS ONE LITTLE FAVOR? PUH-LEEZE?
YOU WANT ME TO WEAR THAT TO A COMIC CON-VENTION?
I'D RATHER GO DRESSED AS A MIME!
BUT THIS BOOK SAYS WE'LL ATTRACT MORE CUSTOMERS IF WE HAVE A SCANTILY CLAD WOMAN AT OUR BOOTH!
HOW TO STRIKE IT RICH AT COMIC CONVEN-TIONS
:SIGH: OKAY..
BUT IF IT LOOKS AS ABSURD AS I THINK IT WILL, THEN ALL BETS ARE OFF...
EE-YES!
THANK YOU, CARRIE...
AND SO...
Y-Y-YOU LOOK GREAT, CARRIE...
HOW DID THIS DRESS GET ALL TORN UP?!
IT'S SUPPOSED TO LOOK THAT WAY...NOW KEEP STILL A SEC...
BE STILL MY HEART!
RRRRIP!
?!? WHAT WAS THAT?
I JUST WANTED TO EXPOSE A BIT MORE BUTT CHEEK, IS ALL...
"BUTT CHEEK"? WHO AM I SUPPOSED TO BE, ANYWAY? THE "HOBO WHORE FROM OUTER SPACE"?
HERE, LEMME SHOW YA...
PEERLESS PENCILLER
YOU'RE DRESSED AS THE MAIN CHARACTER, SEE?
—HER NAME IS "PRINCESS CARRIE"?
PEERLESS PENCILLER
IS SHE SUPPOSED TO BE ME?
HUH?! N-N-NO! THAT'S JUST A COINCIDENCE! I SWEAR!
OOPS! I FORGOT TO CHANGE HER NAME!
WHAT WAS I THINKING?!
OH, FORGET IT! THIS IS TOO WEIRD FOR ME!
YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER "PRIN-CESS BUTTCHEEKS"!
BUT, THE CONVENTION IS THIS W—
NOW WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO?
SHE'S THE ONLY GIRL I KNOW..
DON'T WORRY, I'LL THINK OF SOME-THING...
TAP! TAP!

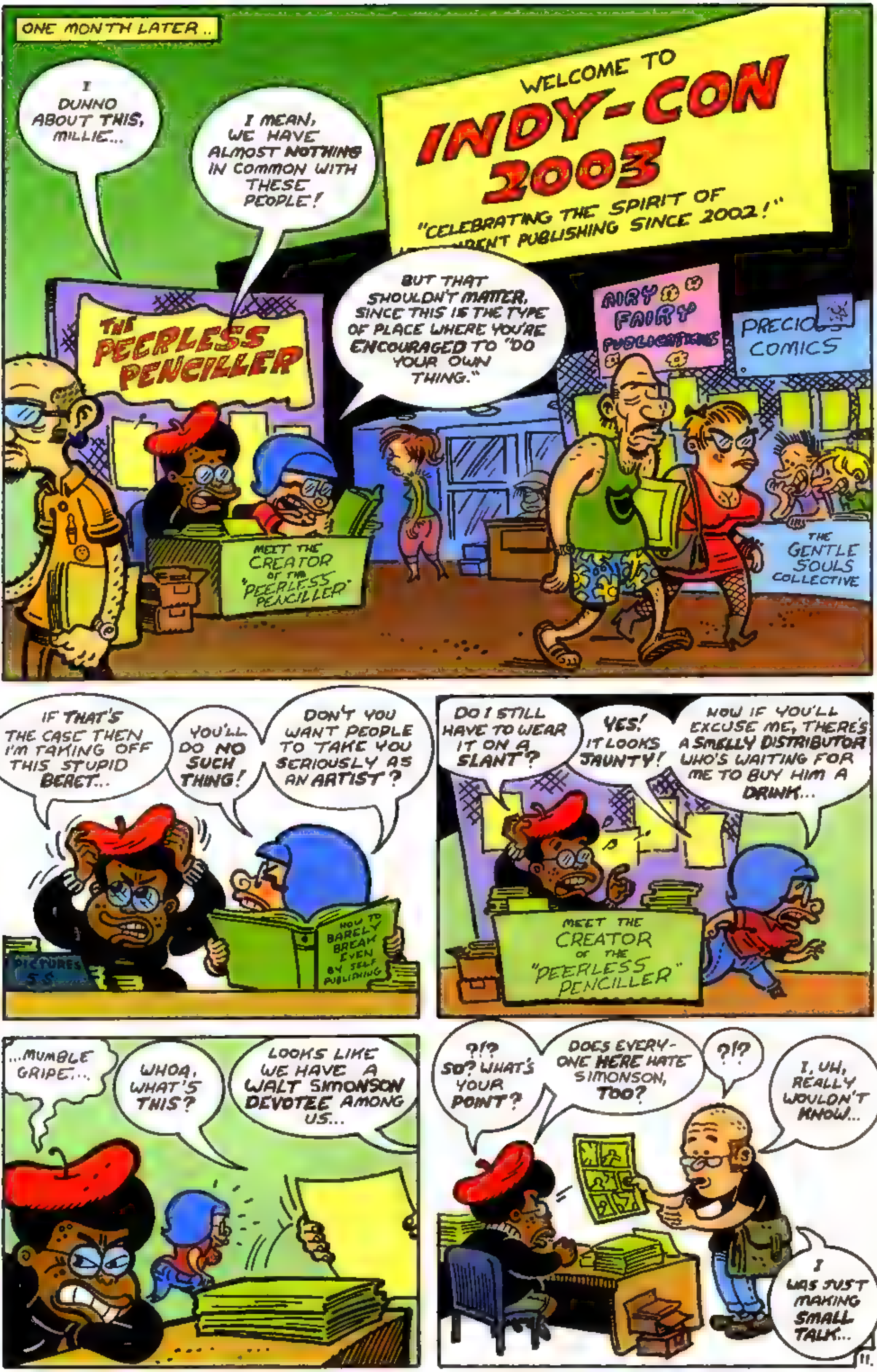

THAT WEEKEND...
WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL SECAUCUS COLLECTIBLES SH...THON
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...
NEITHER DO I...
PERHAPS THE ECONOMY IS TO BLAME...
NO ONE IS COMING NEAR OUR BOOTH, MILLIE!
THE PEERLESS PENCILLER
MEET THE ARTIST AND CREATOR OF THE... "PEERLESS PENCILLER"
MAYBE I SHOULD CHECK OUT THE COMPETITION...
MAYBE I'LL PICK UP A FEW POINTERS FROM ANYONE WHO IS DOING A BOOMING BUSINESS...
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA...
DON'T TAKE TOO LONG, THOUGH. I'M OVERDUE FOR A SNACK BREAK!
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T.
"WHEW!" THAT CRAZY LADY FINALLY LEFT!
I WONDER IF SHE KNOWS HER BUTT CHEEKS ARE SHOWING...
?
HA! HA!
"THE PEERLESS PENCILLER," EH?
ARE THESE, LIKE, OLD REPRINTS OR SOME-THING?
DID YOUR DAD DRAW THESE?
HUH? NO, I DRAW THEM!



YOU DID? NO WAY!
HOW OLD ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
I'M 23. WHY?
IT'S JUST... THE WAY YOU DRAW... IT'S SO... 1970'S...
IT'S SO OLD SCHOOL...
I LEARNED TO DRAW BY COPYING OLD WALT SIMONSON COMICS...
HE'S THE GREATEST ARTIST OF ALL TIME, IN MY OPINION.
THE THING IS, NOBODY DRAWS LIKE THIS ANYMORE...
YEAH, WELL, WHATEVER...
WHO'S WALT SIMONSON?
YES, BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES MY WORK UNIQUE, I THINK...
I WON'T ARGUE WITH THAT...
BUT IT'S JUST SO... I DUNNO... AMERICAN LOOKING...
IT LOOKS RETARDED!
"AMERICAN"?
BUT, I'M AN AMERICAN!
WHAT I MEAN IS, IT ISN'T "MANGA"...
IT'S THE JAPANESE STYLE THAT EVERYONE'S INTO THESE DAYS...
OH...
I KNOW THAT STUFF IS BIG RIGHT NOW...
IT'S JUST THAT... WELL... I DON'T LIKE IT...
WHAT?
NO WAY!
YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT OUR BOOTH, "MANGA MANIA," ON ISLE 3... WE'LL SET YOU UP WITH THE GOOD STUFF!
WE HAVE OUR OWN STORE, TOO...
HERE, I'LL WRITE DOWN OUR ADDRESS...
?!? HE'S WRITING IN ONE OF MY COMICS!
NO OFFENSE, BUT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER INCORPORATING SOME OF THE MANGA STYLE...
THAT'LL AT LEAST MAKE IT LOOK MORE UP-TO-DATE...
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT...
THANKS, I GUESS.
HE RUINED MY COMIC!
ALFRED! I FIGURED OUT WHAT WE WERE DOING WRONG!
OH?
WHAT?
WE SHOULD'VE BEEN GIVING AWAY FREE CANDY!

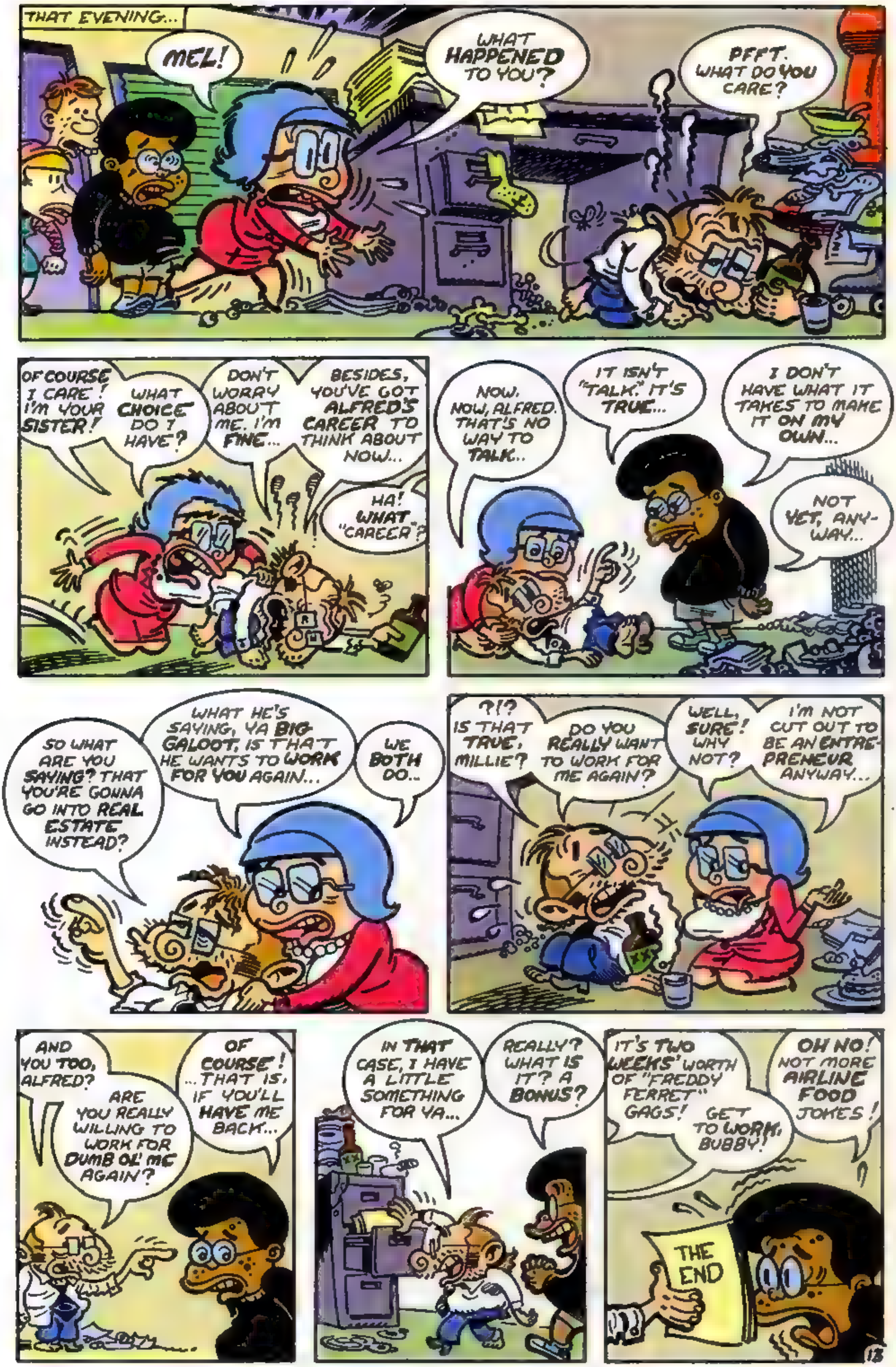
THE NEXT DAY...
WHAT'S THIS YOU'RE WORKING ON, ALFRED?
IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY "FREDDY" RELATED...
IT ISN'T...
IT'S JUST A LITTLE EXERCISE I'M WORKING ON...
I'M TRYING TO LEARN HOW TO DRAW IN THIS JAPANESE "MANGA" STYLE, TO SEE IF I CAN INCORPORATE IT INTO MY OWN WORK SOME-HOW...
WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO THAT?
BECAUSE THIS LOOK IS ALL THE RAGE THESE DAYS, AND I'M HOPING IT'LL MAKE MY OWN WORK MORE MARKETABLE...
ALL THE WOMEN IN THIS COMIC HAVE BIG ROUND EYES...
DON'T THESE JAPANESE ARTISTS KNOW HOW TO DRAW JAPANESE PEOPLE?
BEATS ME...I MYSELF AM HAVING A HARD TIME DRAW-ING A BLACK GUY IN THIS STYLE...
THAT'S EASY! JUST GIVE HIM A PAIR OF BIG, ROUND, BEAU-TIFUL BLUE EYES!
HEH! HEH!
AND DON'T FORGET TO PUT ALL THE GIRLS IN SCHOOL UNIFORMS...
...WHILE BEING WRAPPED UP IN SOME CREATURE'S TENTACLES...
...WHILE THEY SQUEAL AWAY ORGASMICALLY, SINCE THEY SECRETLY ENJOY IT!
HEH-HEH!
GRRR...
—OH, FORGET IT!
THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME!
I HATE "MANGA"!
THAT'S THE SPIRIT!
STICK TO YOUR GUNS!
WHY DOES EVERY-ONE ELSE LOVE IT, THOUGH? I DON'T GET IT!
BEATS ME...
I DON'T LIKE IT...
ME NEITHER.
SIGH WHO AM I KIDDING?
I'LL NEVER MAKE IT ON MY OWN...
I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE...
SO, HOW'RE THOSE "MANGA LESSONS" COMING ALONG?
9

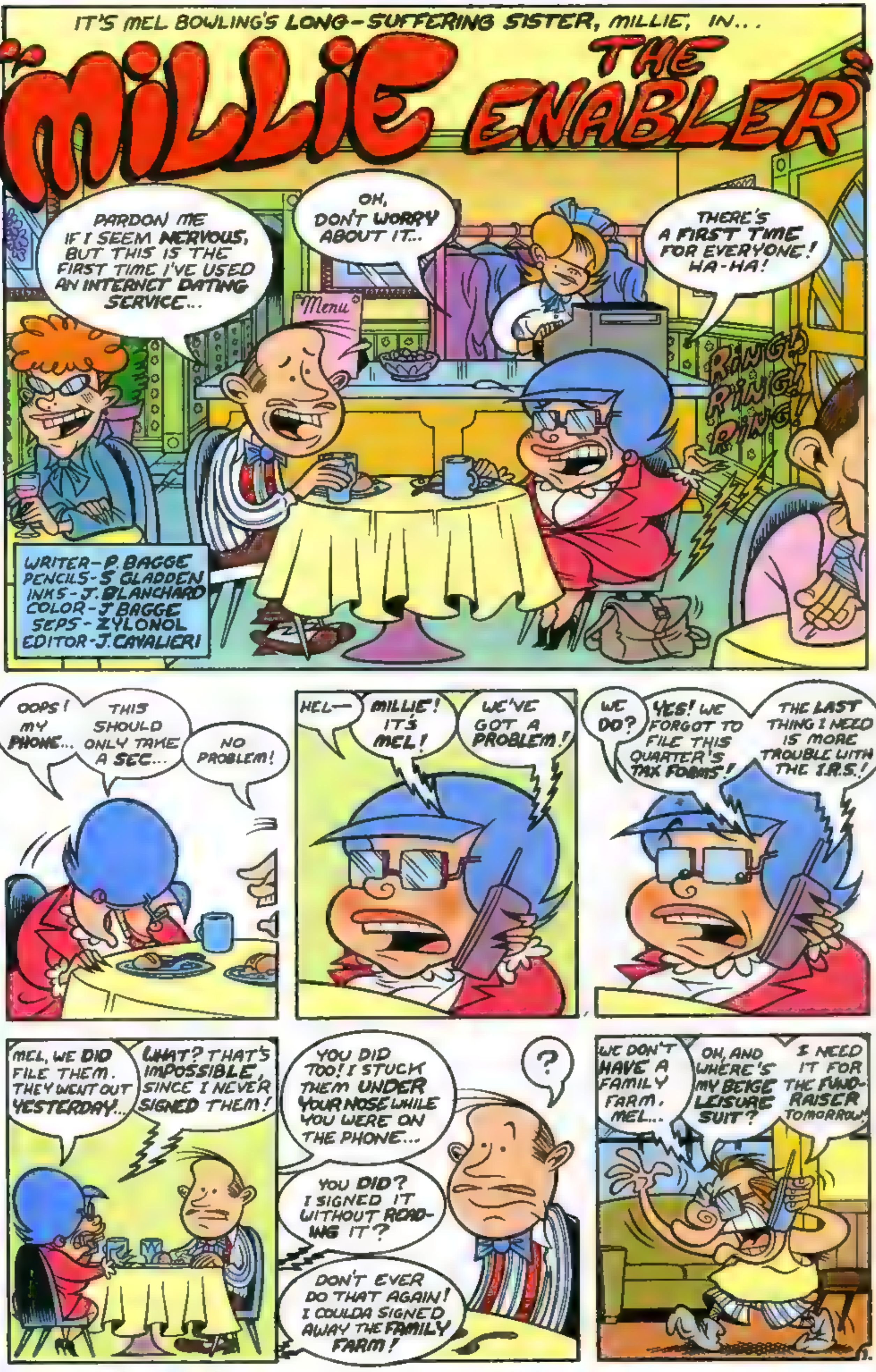

UGGGHH...
ALFRED! WHAT'S WRONG?
ARE YOU SICK?
OH, HE'S SICK ALL RIGHT...
SICK OF MANGA!
I CAN'T DO IT, MILLIE...
I TRIED, BUT I JUST CAN'T ALTER MY DRAWING STYLE...
I'M A HOPELESS CASE... A BIG, FAT RETARD!
NOW, NOW, I WON'T STAND FOR THAT KIND OF TALK...
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON AROUND HERE?!
HOW IS IT THAT NONE OF YOU ARE WORKING RIGHT NOW?
AND WHY IS THERE JAPANESE PORN ALL OVER THE PLACE?
TAKE IT EASY, MEL. ALFRED IS GOING THROUGH A HARD TI—
"ALFRED, ALFRED, ALFRED"!!!
THAT'S ALL YOU EVER TALK ABOUT EVER SINCE YOU'VE DECIDED TO MAKE HIM A CARTOONING SUPERSTAR!
MEL...
DON'T "MEL" ME! JUST LOOK AT THIS PLACE!
IT'S FALLEN APART EVER SINCE THE OFFICE MANAGER STOPPED MANAGING THE OFFICE!
IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY, MEL...
YOU'RE DARNED TOOTIN' IT'S "TEMPORARY," SIS!
EITHER YOU STOP RUNNING ALFRED'S "CAREER" OR YOU'RE FIRED!
YOU CAN'T FIRE ME, 'CUZ I QUIT!
GASP!
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU CAN'T QUIT!
SURE I CAN, 'CUZ I JUST DID!
IZZAT SO? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO INSTEAD, THEN? HMMM?
I'M GONNA START MY OWN BUSINESS...
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE PRESIDENT OF THE "HOPELESSLY OLD SCHOOL, STUCK-IN-THE-'70S COMIC BOOK PUBLISHING COMPANY"!
?
YAY!
HOO-BOY, TALK ABOUT PRESSURE!



ONE MONTH LATER...
WELCOME TO INDY-CON 2003
"CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF
PUBLISHING SINCE 2002!"
I DUNNO ABOUT THIS, MILLIE...
I MEAN, WE HAVE ALMOST NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THESE PEOPLE!
THE PEERLESS PENCILLER
BUT THAT SHOULDN'T MATTER, SINCE THIS IS THE TYPE OF PLACE WHERE YOU'RE ENCOURAGED TO "DO YOUR OWN THING."
AIRY FAIRY PUBLICATIONS
PRECIOUS COMICS
MEET THE CREATOR OF THE "PEERLESS PENCILLER"
THE GENTLE SOULS COLLECTIVE
IF THAT'S THE CASE THEN I'M TAKING OFF THIS STUPID BERET...
YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING!
DON'T YOU WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY AS AN ARTIST?
HOW TO BARELY BREAK EVEN BY SELF PUBLISHING
PICTURES
DO I STILL HAVE TO WEAR IT ON A SLANT?
YES! IT LOOKS JAUNTY!
NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, THERE'S A SMELLY DISTRIBUTOR WHO'S WAITING FOR ME TO BUY HIM A DRINK...
MEET THE CREATOR OF THE "PEERLESS PENCILLER"
...MUMBLE GRIPE...
WHOA, WHAT'S THIS?
LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE A WALT SIMONSON DEVOTEE AMONG US...
?!? SO? WHAT'S YOUR POINT?
DOES EVERYONE HERE HATE SIMONSON, TOO?
?!?
I, UH, REALLY WOULDN'T KNOW...
I WAS JUST MAKING SMALL TALK...

OH.
HEY, I WASN'T KNOCKING YOU FOR IT!
I ASSUME BY THE JAUNTY BERET THAT YOU'RE THE ARTIST?
OH, YEAH, I'M ALFRED POST...
ARE YOU AN ARTIST, TOO?
YES, SADLY. HERE, I'LL GIVE YOU A COPY OF MY BOOK...
"BLACK HOLE"?
DOES THIS TAKE PLACE IN OUTER SPACE?
ER... NO.
BLACK HOLE
LOOK, I GOTTA RUN...
GOOD LUCK, OKAY?
THANKS.
THE POOR SAP!
WHAT A NICE GUY...
...BUT HIS ART-WORK IS SO DISGUSTING-LOOKING...
I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK...
BLACK HOLE
BLARF!
LATER...
ALFRED! WHERE'S MILLIE?
WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER!
SHE'S PLYING SOME SLEAZY BUSINESSMAN WITH LIQUOR RIGHT NOW. WHY?
AND WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE, ANYWAY?
IT'S MEL! THE GUY'S A TOTAL MESS EVER SINCE MILLIE QUIT!
WE'VE GOT TO TALK HER INTO COMING BACK TO WORK FOR HIM AGAIN!
?!? YOU CAME DOWN HERE JUST FOR MEL'S SAKE?
WELL, THAT, PLUS I WANTED TO SCORE SOME NEW COMICS...
CHECK THIS OUT: CHARLES BURNS JUST SIGNED A COPY OF "BLACK HOLE" FOR ME!
?!?
BLACK HOLE
BLARF!
12

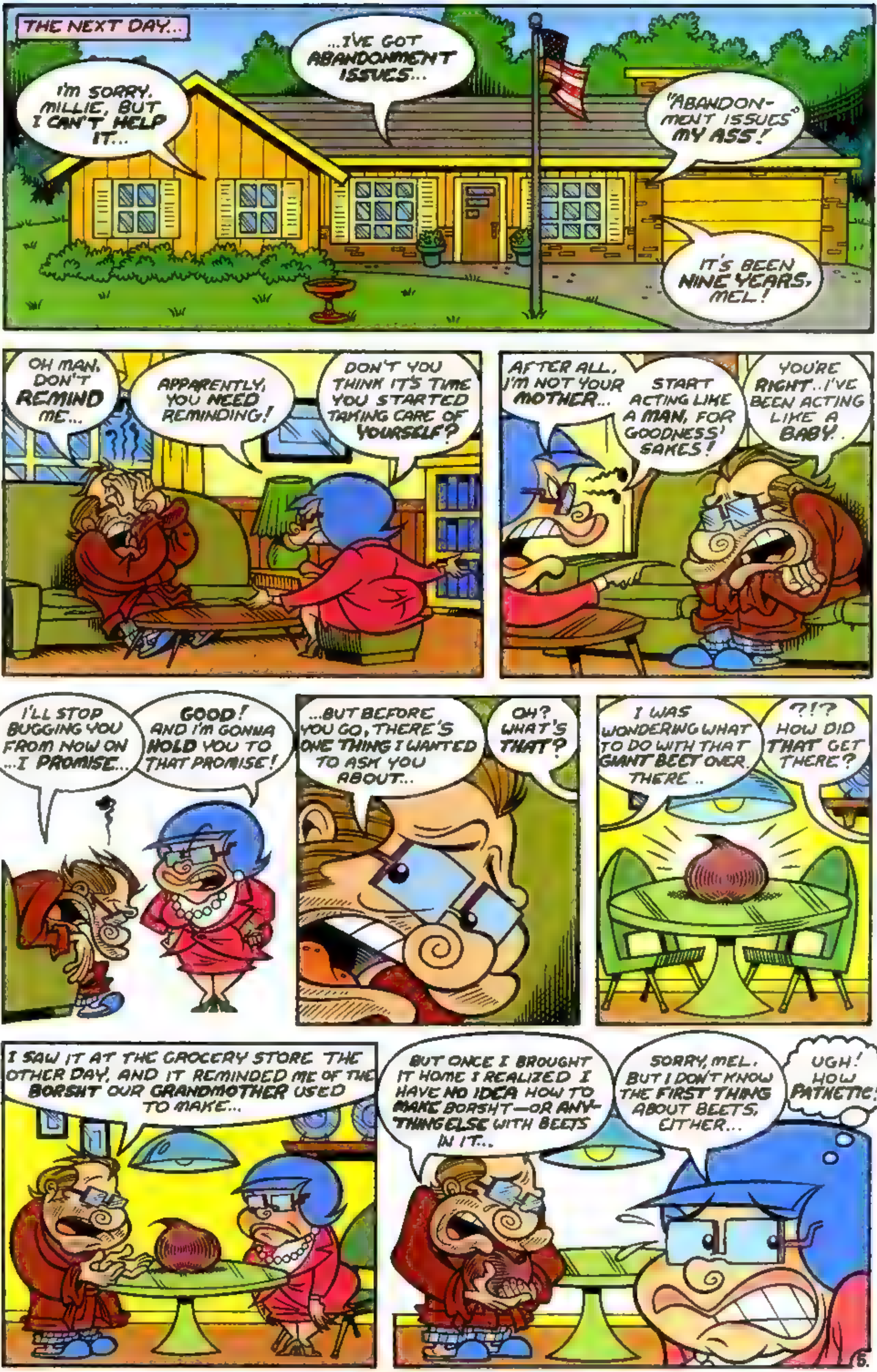

THAT EVENING...
MEL!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
PFFT. WHAT DO YOU CARE?
OF COURSE I CARE! I'M YOUR SISTER!
WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I'M FINE...
BESIDES, YOU'VE GOT ALFRED'S CAREER TO THINK ABOUT NOW...
HA! WHAT "CAREER"?
NOW, NOW, ALFRED. THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK...
IT ISN'T "TALK." IT'S TRUE...
I DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE IT ON MY OWN...
NOT YET, ANYWAY...
SO WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT YOU'RE GONNA GO INTO REAL ESTATE INSTEAD?
WHAT HE'S SAYING, YA BIG GALOOT, IS THAT HE WANTS TO WORK FOR YOU AGAIN...
WE BOTH DO...
?!? IS THAT TRUE, MILLIE?
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO WORK FOR ME AGAIN?
WELL, SURE! WHY NOT?
I'M NOT CUT OUT TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR ANYWAY...
AND YOU TOO, ALFRED?
ARE YOU REALLY WILLING TO WORK FOR DUMB OL' ME AGAIN?
OF COURSE! ...THAT IS, IF YOU'LL HAVE ME BACK...
IN THAT CASE, I HAVE A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YA...
REALLY? WHAT IS IT? A BONUS?
IT'S TWO WEEKS' WORTH OF "FREDDY FERRET" GAGS!
GET TO WORK, BUBBY!
OH NO! NOT MORE AIRLINE FOOD JOKES!
THE END
13


IT'S MEL BOWLING'S LONG-SUFFERING SISTER, MILLIE, IN...
"MILLIE THE ENABLER"
PARDON ME IF I SEEM NERVOUS, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE USED AN INTERNET DATING SERVICE...
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYONE! HA-HA!
Menu
RING! RING! RING!
WRITER-P. BAGGE
PENCILS-S. GLADDEN
INKS-J. BLANCHARD
COLOR-J. BAGGE
SEPS-ZYLONOL
EDITOR-J. CAVALIERI
OOPS! MY PHONE...
THIS SHOULD ONLY TAKE A SEC...
NO PROBLEM!
HEL—
MILLIE! IT'S MEL!
WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM!
WE DO?
YES! WE FORGOT TO FILE THIS QUARTER'S TAX FORMS!
THE LAST THING I NEED IS MORE TROUBLE WITH THE I.R.S.!
MEL, WE DID FILE THEM. THEY WENT OUT YESTERDAY...
WHAT? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, SINCE I NEVER SIGNED THEM!
YOU DID TOO! I STUCK THEM UNDER YOUR NOSE WHILE YOU WERE ON THE PHONE...
?
YOU DID? I SIGNED IT WITHOUT READING IT?
DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN! I COULDA SIGNED AWAY THE FAMILY FARM!
WE DON'T HAVE A FAMILY FARM, MEL...
OH, AND WHERE'S MY BEIGE LEISURE SUIT?
I NEED IT FOR THE FUND-RAISER TOMORROW

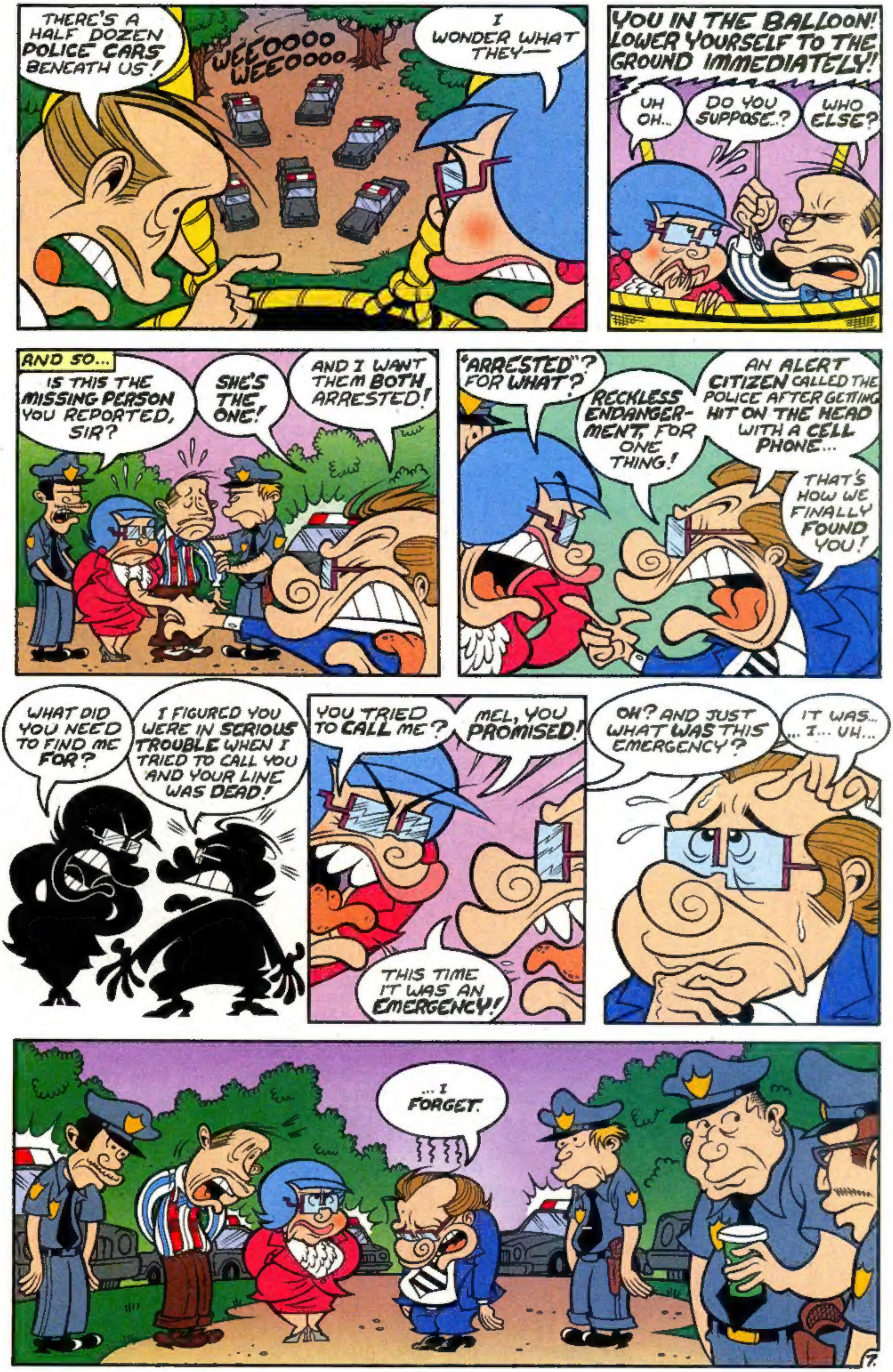
I'LL BE STOPPING BY THE CLEANERS LATER...
GOOD! THEN BRING IT STRAIGHT TO MY PLACE!
AND ANOTHER THING—
MEL, CAN'T IT WAIT? I'M ON A DATE RIGHT NOW, AND—
A "DATE"? WITH WHO?
YOU'RE NOT STILL SEEING THAT PERUVIAN GUY, ARE YOU?
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!
LOOK, WE'LL TALK LATER, OKAY?
JUST HANG UP THE PHONE, MEL... HANG U—
GOOD-BYE, MEL!
BOOP!
SO, WHERE WERE WE?
HEH HEH!
WHO, MIGHT I ASK, WAS THAT?
AN EX? OR YOUR HUSBAND, PERHAPS?
MY "HUSBAND"? HEAVENS, NO!
THAT WAS MY BROTHER.
WHO ALSO HAPPENS TO BE MY BOSS, UNFORTUNATELY..
HE SEEMS AWFULLY DEPENDENT ON YOU...
YES, WELL, HE'S BEEN FLOUNDERING EVER SINCE HIS DIVORCE, SO IT'S HARD FOR ME TO TURN MY BACK ON HIM...
HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN DIVORCED?
OH, IT'S GOING ON NINE YEARS NOW, I GUESS...
?!? NINE YEARS?
YES, ROUGHLY...
WHY DO YOU ASK?
UH, PERHAPS WE SHOULD CHANGE THE SUBJECT...
?

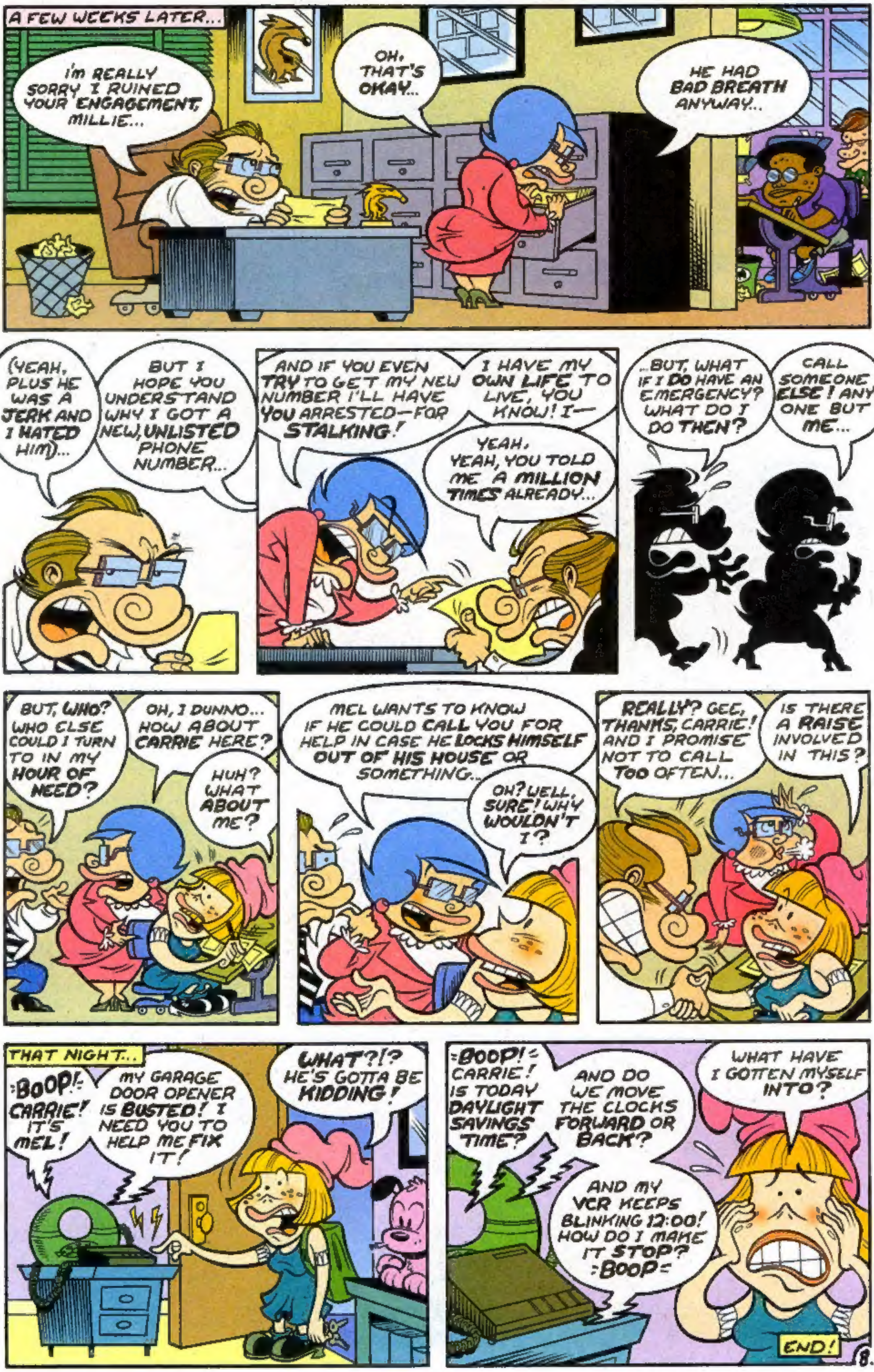
A FEW WEEKS LATER...
IT SURE IS NICE TO GET AWAY FOR A WHILE, HUH, MILLIE?
YOU SAID IT!
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I HAD A REAL VACATION!
I'M JUST GLAD WE WERE ABLE TO TAKE ONE TOGETHER...
ME TOO...
RING! RING! RING!
SIGH... I WONDER WHO THIS COULD BE.
OH, I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD HUNCH...
RING! RING! RING!
HEL—
MILLIE! IT'S MEL...
WHERE'D YOU PUT THE ADAPTER FOR MY LAPTOP!
YOUR ADAPTER? HOW WOULD I KNOW?
DID YOU LOOK IN YOUR BRIEF-CASE?
OF COURSE! I LOOKED EVERY-WHERE!
YOU HAVE TO HELP ME FIND IT! NOW!
"NOW"? MEL, I'M IN THE BAHAMAS!
SO? COME BACK!
YOU'VE BEEN GONE FOR WEEKS ALREADY!
UNBELIEVABLE!
I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE FOR TWO DAYS! AND I'LL COME BACK WHEN I'M GOOD AND READY!
UNTIL THEN, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO GET BY WITHOUT YOUR ADAPTER SOMEHOW!
GOOD-BYE!
TELL ME, MILLIE: IS YOUR BROTHER MUCH YOUNGER THAN YOU?
NO, HE'S FIVE YEARS OLDER...
WHY DO YOU ASK?
OH, JUST CURIOUS, IS ALL...
UNBELIEV-ABLE!
?
3

A FEW WEEKS LATER...
RACE YA!
OKAY!
RING! RING! RING!
?!?
HELLO?
SMASH!
MILLIE! WHERE DO YOU STORE THE PAPER CLIPS?
AND THE WEEK AFTER THAT...
I'M BEATING YOU THIS TIME!
NOT FOR LONG!
RING! RING!
NOW WHAT?
MILLIE! HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COOK A THREE MINUTE EGG?
ZIP!
EVENTUALLY...
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TALKED ME INTO BUNGEE-JUMPING!
HEY, YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE!
READY? ONE... TWO...
THREE!
LEAP!
I HOPE YOU REMEMBERED TO SHUT OFF YOUR CELL PHONE THIS TIME...
UH-OH. I THINK I F—
RING! RING!
SIGH... WHAT IS IT, MEL?
MILLIE, YOU'RE PROBABLY GONNA THINK I'M CRAZY...
...BUT I'D SWEAR THE DRYER IS EATING ALL OF MY SOCKS!
BOI-OI-OING!
MEL, WE HAVE TO TALK...
SWING
SWAY

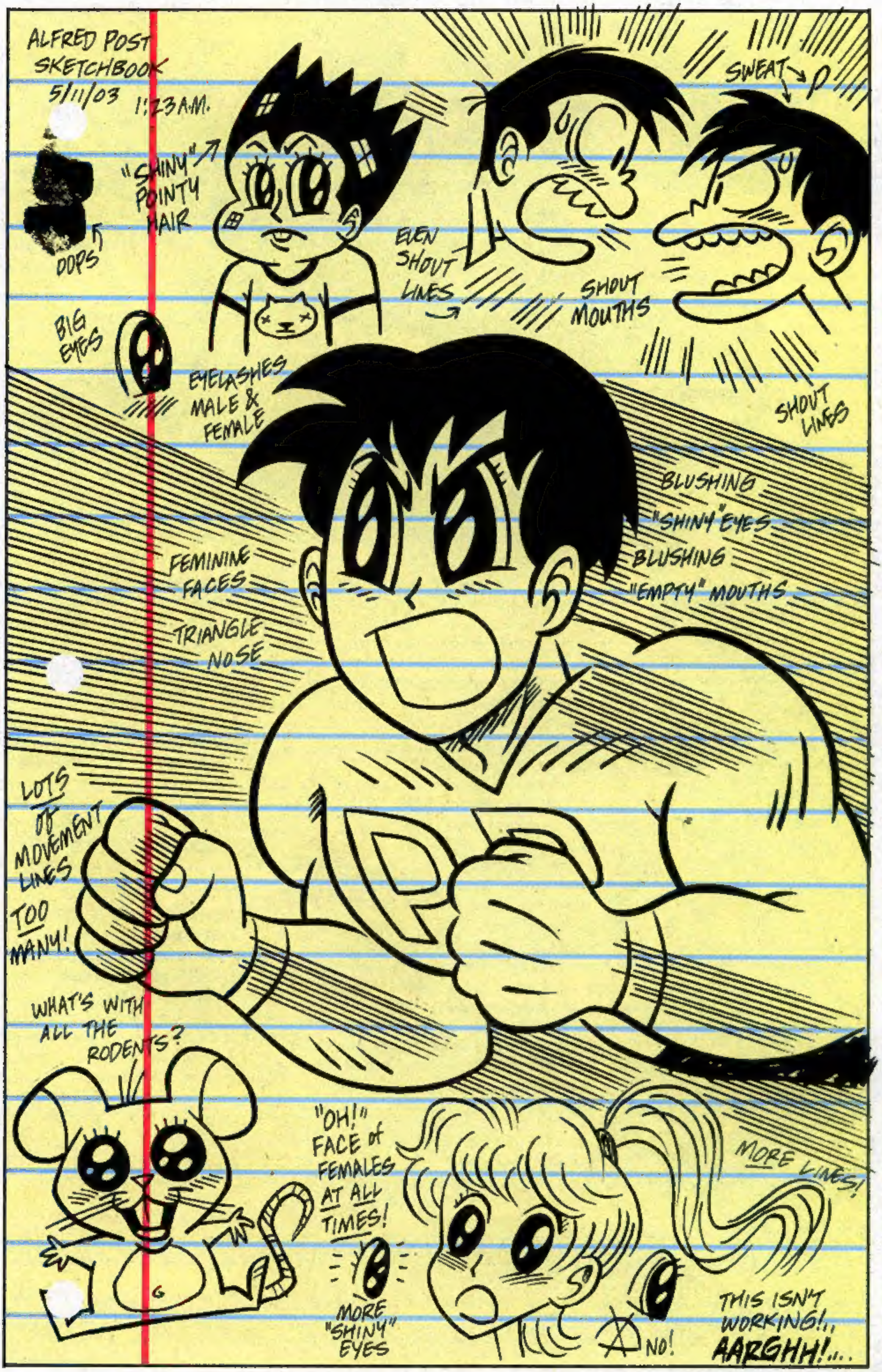

THE NEXT DAY...
I'M SORRY, MILLIE, BUT I CAN'T HELP IT...
...I'VE GOT ABANDONMENT ISSUES...
"ABANDONMENT ISSUES" MY ASS!
IT'S BEEN NINE YEARS, MEL!
OH MAN. DON'T REMIND ME...
APPARENTLY, YOU NEED REMINDING!
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME YOU STARTED TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF?
AFTER ALL, I'M NOT YOUR MOTHER...
START ACTING LIKE A MAN, FOR GOODNESS' SAKES!
YOU'RE RIGHT...I'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE A BABY.
I'LL STOP BUGGING YOU FROM NOW ON ...I PROMISE...
GOOD! AND I'M GONNA HOLD YOU TO THAT PROMISE!
...BUT BEFORE YOU GO, THERE'S ONE THING I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT...
OH? WHAT'S THAT?
I WAS WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH THAT GIANT BEET OVER THERE...
?!? HOW DID THAT GET THERE?
I SAW IT AT THE GROCERY STORE THE OTHER DAY, AND IT REMINDED ME OF THE BORSHT OUR GRANDMOTHER USED TO MAKE...
BUT ONCE I BROUGHT IT HOME I REALIZED I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO MAKE BORSHT—OR ANYTHING ELSE WITH BEETS IN IT...
SORRY, MEL. BUT I DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT BEETS, EITHER...
UGH! HOW PATHETIC!

THE NEXT EVENING...
OH, THIS IS SO ROMANTIC!
I HAD NO IDEA YOU KNEW HOW TO OPERATE A HOT AIR BALLOON!
I'M FULL OF SURPRISES, BABY!
AND I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER ONE IN STORE FOR YOU THIS EVENING...
BUT FIRST, I MUST ASK YOU ONE MORE TIME...
ARE YOU SURE YOU TURNED YOUR CELL PHONE OFF?
YES! AND I TOLD YOU MEL PROMISED NOT TO CALL ANYMORE...
...BUT JUST TO MAKE SURE OUR EVENING ISN'T RUINED...
...THERE! SO LONG, "MEL"!
HA-HA! EXCELLENT!
LATER...
SO, WHAT WAS THIS OTHER SURPRISE YOU MENTIONED?
OH, NOTHING MUCH...
ONLY THIS...
GASP
IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
IT SURE IS...
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY, MILLIE? WILL YOU M—
?!?
WHAT TH—?


THERE'S A HALF DOZEN POLICE CARS BENEATH US!
WEEOOOO WEEOOOO
I WONDER WHAT THEY—
YOU IN THE BALLOON! LOWER YOURSELF TO THE GROUND IMMEDIATELY!
UH OH...
DO YOU SUPPOSE..?
WHO ELSE?
AND SO...
IS THIS THE MISSING PERSON YOU REPORTED, SIR?
SHE'S THE ONE!
AND I WANT THEM BOTH ARRESTED!
"ARRESTED"? FOR WHAT?
RECKLESS ENDANGER-MENT, FOR ONE THING!
AN ALERT CITIZEN CALLED THE POLICE AFTER GETTING HIT ON THE HEAD WITH A CELL PHONE...
THAT'S HOW WE FINALLY FOUND YOU!
WHAT DID YOU NEED TO FIND ME FOR?
I FIGURED YOU WERE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE WHEN I TRIED TO CALL YOU AND YOUR LINE WAS DEAD!
YOU TRIED TO CALL ME?
MEL, YOU PROMISED!
THIS TIME IT WAS AN EMERGENCY!
OH? AND JUST WHAT WAS THIS EMERGENCY?
IT WAS... ...I... UH...
...I FORGET.
7



A FEW WEEKS LATER...
I'M REALLY SORRY I RUINED YOUR ENGAGEMENT, MILLIE...
OH, THAT'S OKAY...
HE HAD BAD BREATH ANYWAY...
(YEAH, PLUS HE WAS A JERK AND I HATED HIM)...
BUT I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I GOT A NEW, UNLISTED PHONE NUMBER...
AND IF YOU EVEN TRY TO GET MY NEW NUMBER I'LL HAVE YOU ARRESTED—FOR STALKING!
I HAVE MY OWN LIFE TO LIVE, YOU KNOW! I—
YEAH, YEAH, YOU TOLD ME A MILLION TIMES ALREADY...
...BUT, WHAT IF I DO HAVE AN EMERGENCY? WHAT DO I DO THEN?
CALL SOMEONE ELSE! ANYONE BUT ME...
BUT, WHO? WHO ELSE COULD I TURN TO IN MY HOUR OF NEED?
OH, I DUNNO... HOW ABOUT CARRIE HERE?
HUH? WHAT ABOUT ME?
MEL WANTS TO KNOW IF HE COULD CALL YOU FOR HELP IN CASE HE LOCKS HIMSELF OUT OF HIS HOUSE OR SOMETHING...
OH? WELL, SURE! WHY WOULDN'T I?
REALLY? GEE, THANKS, CARRIE! AND I PROMISE NOT TO CALL TOO OFTEN...
IS THERE A RAISE INVOLVED IN THIS?
THAT NIGHT...
-BOOP!- CARRIE! IT'S MEL!
MY GARAGE DOOR OPENER IS BUSTED! I NEED YOU TO HELP ME FIX IT!
WHAT?!? HE'S GOTTA BE KIDDING!
-BOOP!- CARRIE! IS TODAY DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME?
AND DO WE MOVE THE CLOCKS FORWARD OR BACK?
AND MY VCR KEEPS BLINKING 12:00! HOW DO I MAKE IT STOP? -BOOP-
WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
END!


ALFRED POST SKETCHBOOK 5/11/03 1:23 A.M.
"SHINY" POINTY HAIR
OOPS
BIG EYES
EYELASHES MALE & FEMALE
EVEN SHOUT LINES
SHOUT MOUTHS
SWEAT
SHOUT LINES
BLUSHING
"SHINY" EYES
BLUSHING
"EMPTY" MOUTHS
FEMININE FACES
TRIANGLE NOSE
LOTS OF MOVEMENT LINES
TOO MANY!
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE RODENTS?
"OH!" FACE OF FEMALES AT ALL TIMES!
MORE "SHINY" EYES
MORE LINES!
NO!
THIS ISN'T WORKING!.. AARGHH!...

DC IN DEMAND

06.03

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This Month's Cover by...
PETER BAGGE

Next Month in...
Sweatshop #4

The only things worse than our cast's career choices are their relationship choices! Nick and Alfred discover that they have "The Wrong Dates!" Plus, "Freddy Gets 'Edgy'!" This isn't your father's Freddy Ferret...and why would you want that in the first place?

The Hot List THIS MONTH

GREEN ARROW: SOUNDS OF VIOLENCE

Acclaimed filmaker Kevin Smith's follow-up to the popular GREEN ARROW: QUIVER storyline. Art by Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Matt Wagner.

BIRDS OF PREY #56

The new creative team of Gail Simone (*Agent X*) and Ed Benes & Alex Lei (SUPERGIRL) takes flight as the Birds of Prey run afoul of the insane mastermind Savant.

BATMAN/SUPERMAN/WONDER WOMAN: TRINITY #1

Finally, the classic tale of Batman and Superman's first encounter with Wonder Woman can be told! A billionaire eco-terrorist has unearthed a deadly weapon, and it is up to three inexperienced heroes to stop him. Written and illustrated by Matt Wagner.

OUTSIDERS #1

What do you get when a barrel of fierce monkey warriors attacks Manhattan? Mayhem! Nightwing and Arsenal must decide how to contain them with a new team of heroes...but first, how to recruit them? By Judd Winick, Tom Raney and Scott Hanna.

THE DEMON: DRIVEN OUT #1 (SEPTEMBER 2003)

Illegal street racing, demonology, techno-alchemists and Yakuza assassins...only Etrigan can make life actually hell in the City of Angels! **THE DEMON: DRIVEN OUT**, a six-issue hyper-pulp experience written by **Joshua Dysart** (*Violent Messiahs*) with artist **Pop Mhan** (*SpyBoy*), puts the rhyming rogue in a new setting with a new female host. Meanwhile, Jason Blood must reclaim Etrigan before he takes over the Japanese mob! High-octane haiku hits the road this September!

DANGEROUS CURVES

Our sources dug deep and uncovered the dirt on three new series that emphasize mature themes and star female characters unlike any you've encountered in comics before. In July, fan favorite **Peter David** (SUPERGIRL) and talented newcomers **David Lopez** (LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT) and Fernando Blanco (*Star Wars*) deliver an ongoing series starring **FALLEN ANGEL**, a mysterious hooded savior who succors troubled souls. Second in the lineup is **BAD GIRLS**, featuring high-school divas who use newly gained abilities to climb to the head of the social class. Bongo Comics founder **Steve Vance** and white-hot artist **Jennifer Graves** (GOTHAM GIRLS) liken this six-issue miniseries to "*Heathers* with super-powers." Finally, for video game players looking to bridge the gap over to comics, **LEGION** writers **Dan Abnett** and **Andy Lanning** and fantastic new talent Kalman Andrasofszky have created the perfect platform with **iCANDY**, the monthly adventures of a video game character brought to life in the real world and the boy who discovers her, due in September.

AND NOW FOR SOME THINGS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Our super-hearing's been working overtime in the DC hallways, and we can hardly believe our ears over the incredible Superman projects in development. Though still in the early stages, *Lone Wolf 2100* writer **Mike Kennedy** and artist extraordinaire **Carlos Meglia** (SUPERMAN/TARZAN) have an out-of-this-world Superman story in the making. And you'd probably expect to see a *Flying Circus* before reading a Superman tale penned by a *Monty Python* alumnus, but it's in the works – funnyman **John Cleese** brings his super-sense of humor to **SUPERMAN: TRUE BRIT**, offering a truly unique perspective of the icon. Joining Cleese are co-writer **Kim Howard Johnson**, penciller **John Byrne** (who's certainly no stranger to the Man of Steel) and inker **Mark Farmer!**

To get more of DC in Demand's Inside Scoop, go to www.dccomics.com/dcindemand right now!

CINNAMON SPICES UP THE NEW WEST

Critically lauded *Hopeless Savages* scribe **Jen Van Meter** and artists **Francisco Paronzini** (*Dead to Rights*) and **Robert Campanella** (BATGIRL) give the classic Western a dramatic facelift this August with **CINNAMON: EL CICLO.** A cross between *The Searchers* and 100 BULLETS, this four-issue tale of revenge, L.A. turf wars and shady deals introduces a modern-day take on the popular female bounty hunter, with a gripping story and stunning artwork on target to blow readers away!

– your Mole at 1700

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